

HOUSE RESOLUTION 82

By Stewart

A RESOLUTION to create a study committee on the relationship between infant mortality, teen pregnancy, and access to birth control.

WHEREAS, the issue of access to abortion has dominated public and political discussion to the detriment of other related issues of importance; and

WHEREAS, Tennessee's infant mortality rate is 9.0 deaths per 1,000 live births, significantly higher than the national average of 6.9 deaths per 1,000 live births; and

WHEREAS, in 2007, thirteen thousand eight hundred and nine (13,809) teenagers between the ages of ten (10) and nineteen (19) years of age were pregnant in Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, in 2004, teen child bearing cost Tennessee taxpayers one hundred eighty one million dollars (\$181,000,000); and

WHEREAS, education and access to birth control are likely factors in the high incidence of teen births; and

WHEREAS, there appears to be a direct correlation between infant mortality rates and teen birth rates;

WHEREAS, there is also a direct correlation between infant mortality and other indicators of the health of women in Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, state government can play a significant role in reducing infant mortality and teen birth rates in the state of Tennessee; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, that there is hereby created a special committee to study and identify methods and practices for reducing infant mortality and the incidence of teen pregnancy.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the committee shall consist of six (6) members, of which three (3) shall represent each party. The speaker shall designate one member as chair.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all appropriate state agencies shall provide assistance to the special committee upon request of the chair.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all legislative members of the special committee who are duly elected members of the General Assembly shall remain members of such committee until the committee reports its findings and recommendations to the General Assembly.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the special committee shall be convened by the member with the most years of continuous service in the General Assembly, and at its first meeting shall elect a chair, vice-chair, and such other officers the committee deems necessary.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the special committee shall timely report its findings and recommendations, including any proposed legislation, to the One Hundred Sixth General Assembly no later than February 1, 2010, at which time the committee shall cease to exist.